

Constitution of St Mary's Pastoral Council

1. Title:

1.1 The title shall be "St Mary's Parish Pastoral Council", hereinafter called the "Council."

2. Aims & Objectives:

The overall aim of the Council is to promote and support the pastoral life of the parish in all its aspects.

Objectives are:-

- To be a consultative voice, but through its insights, expertise and advice, to provide support to the parish priests in identifying, evaluating and implementing pastoral initiatives and policies.
- To provide a channel of communication for the opinions and proposals of the members of the parish community, and between the various groups working in the parish.
- To promote an active interest and participation by parishioners in all the activities of the parish with the aim to make the fullest use of the particular skills and professional abilities of the parishioners.

In its activities the Council will be guided by the following aspects:-

- *A PASTORAL FOCUS*
- *REPRESENTATION*
- *PARISH OWNERSHIP*
- *PRAYERFULNESS*
- *LISTENING*
- *CONSENSUS*
- *CONSULTATION*
- *GROWTH*
- *ENABLING PARISHIONERS TO LIVE THE FAITH*
- *EVANGELISATION*
- *BUILDING SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND GROWTH THROUGH NEW MEMBERS*

3. Relationship of the Council with the Parish Priest:

3.1 The Council shall exercise its functions within the norms of the Code of Canon Law.

4. Membership:

The Council shall comprise:

4.1 The permanent members:

- The Parish Priest and Parish Clergy.
- A representative from the Finance Committee.

4.2 The elected members:

- Eight (8) lay members of the Parish.

4.3 The Co-opted Members [if any]:

- The Council shall have the power to co-opt additional lay persons for such specific time as the Council shall decide, which period shall not exceed one year.
- Such co-opted members shall not have the right to vote at Council meetings.

5 Eligibility for membership

All regular worshippers are eligible to be members of the Council.

6 Period of membership

6.1 All members shall serve three years and if eligible may stand for re-election. (Elected members may not usually serve more than six consecutive years.)

6.2 Where there is more than one nomination for a vacancy, elections will take place by secret ballot at all masses at dates to be publicised in the Bulletin. At least two weeks notice will be given in the newsletter of these ballots.

6.3 If a vacancy occurs during the year, a new member shall be elected by ballot as above. A vacancy arises if a member dies, resigns in writing (to the Chair) or has not attended meetings on three consecutive occasions without reasonable cause.

7. Officers of the Council:

7.1 The Council shall elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson (if required) from amongst its members.

7.2 The Parish Administrator shall act as Parish Council Secretary.

8. Elections:

8.1 To be held to elect the eight (8) lay members under par 4.2.1 above:

8.2 Three yearly elections shall take place in the Autumn at a date decided by the Parish Council.

8.3 Nominations, for which the prior consent of the nominee must be obtained, shall be submitted to the Parish Priest at least seven [7] days before the date of the elections.

8.5 Election shall be by simple majority votes

9. Meetings of the Parish

9.1 Twice annually (in the Spring and the Autumn) an Open Meeting shall be held for information and responding to parishioners.

9.1.1 Such notice shall be accompanied by any necessary reports.

10 Meetings of the Council:

10.1 The Council shall meet at least seven (7) times each year, but as often as thought necessary by the Parish Priest and the Chairperson of the Council. Meetings will not normally be held in August or December

10.2 The items discussed at Council meetings (action log) would be recorded in the Parish newsletter.

10.3 A minimum of four (4) Council members shall form a quorum. Nominees can represent members, but do not carry voting rights.

- 10.4 In the event the Parish Priest is unable to be present at the notified Council meeting, the Council may still meet to discuss and make recommendations as appropriate to the business in hand. Any such resolutions shall be reviewed with Parish Priest at the earliest opportunity.
- 10.5 The Parish Priest shall have a casting vote should this be necessary.
- 10.6 Notices of Meeting shall suffice if published in the parish weekly Newsletter or having been agreed in advance for the year by the Council?
- 10.7 The agenda for the meeting should be given to members at least one week in advance of the relevant meeting, together with any notes or other relevant material, to allow proper time for reading and reflection. (This agenda will be available to parishioners on or before the Sunday preceding the meeting)
- 10.8 Minutes of the meeting will be circulated by the Secretary at an agreed time after the meeting has taken place. (Agreed Minutes will be available to parishioners as soon as possible after being agreed.)

11 Voting

Voting at Council meetings shall be a show of hands

12 Council business:

- 12.1 The Council may appoint a sub-committee to conduct such business the Council shall authorise from time to time.
- 12.2 The Council shall determine the Terms of Reference for such committees, and remain fully accountable and responsible for such committees.

13. Amendments to the Constitution:

- 13.1 Amendment to the Constitution may be made at an Annual General Meeting of the parish or at a Council meeting.
- 13.2 A majority of two thirds of those present at the meeting shall be necessary to carry any amendment.